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THE
Celestial City:

GLIMPSES WITHIN THE GATES.

BY
REV. JAMES D. BURNS, M. A.
HAMPSTEAD, LONDON.

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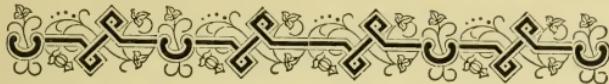
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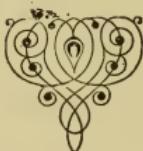
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THE CELESTIAL CITY.

No Sorrow There.

"Neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain." — Rev. xxi. 4.

GOD," says Augustine, "had one Son without sin; He has had no son without sorrow."

Look back on the way by which God has led thee, O traveler to Zion! through the wilderness. If sometimes thou hast walked in sunshine, and with the free elastic step of hope and joy, how often, how quickly, have clouds gathered above thee, and left thee to go onward in heaviness and gloom! Thou hast had to cleave thy way through a "great fight of afflictions." The "Man of Sorrows" has marked thee with the sign of suffering. He has made thee feel the weight and sharp-

ness of the spiritual cross. And how often has it been from the red letters of thy trial that thou hast slowly deciphered the new name, “Son?”

Would a Christian be without that chastisement whereof all the children “are partakers?” Would that be gain which made him an outcast and stranger? Has he not seen affliction sealed and bound up with the blessings of the covenant? learned how great a privilege it is to hear the Father’s graver voice, and feel his correcting hand?

O blessed affliction, who deserves thee! Not every one attains to the great preferment of trial. For the iron chain of suffering links with the golden chain of glory. Not only is it suffering, then glory;—but suffering, therefore glory. “This light affliction worketh a weight of glory.” These are the rough steps by which faith climbs upward to the throne.

Why then art thou filled with vexing thoughts? Look forward to the end, when

patience shall have “its perfect work,” and witness-bearing, in this temptation, its bright reward.

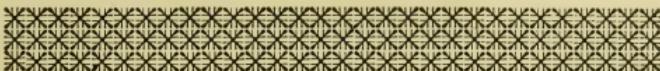
The toilsome stages of thy journey end on the border of the better country. No sorrow, no crying, no pain are there! No anguish of temptation, no shrinkings of fear, no tears of penitence, no agony of prayer. The cross is lifted off. The bitter cup is taken from thee. The trenching and the pruning are over, and on every branch of the tree which felt the knife, cluster “the peaceable fruits of righteousness,” the pleasant grapes of the vineyard of God. There we are past the preface and first pages of the covenant, which teach us what the discipline of sonship is. We are now in the heart and core of its blessings, knowing how glorious are the privileges of sonship, how unspeakable its joys. We shall cry out no more for sore bereavement or besetting sin. We shall watch no more against an enemy, nor see some evil shadow lurk in every pleasure,

and feel it steal upon our sleep. Our Father's hand has wiped away our tears. The Saviour's voice says, "Weep not, the days of thy mourning are ended!" And the thought of past grief and trouble will come to us only to sweeten every moment of our rest. For sin, our deepest sorrow, comes not there. There, O Christian! "the evil heart of unbelief" throbs no more, and the poisoned garment of the flesh has fallen from thee for ever.

It will be thy blessedness there to think thou hast borne pain and trial for thy Lord. For every wound of thy warfare, for every talent of thy service, thy Lord will say "Well done!" For there the martyr, who had the baptism of blood, stands next the Prince of Sufferers—Him, who thinks the crown of thorns not the least among his "many crowns."

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
looking unto Jesus ; who, for the joy that was
set before him, endured the cross."

Heb. xii. 1, 2.



No Night There.

“There shall be no night there.” — Rev. xxii. 5.

EVENING and morning make up the days of Earth — dark and bright stripes woven alternate and unceasing in the swiftly lengthening web of Time. Our changeful lives are like intricate devices traced upon that checkered woof. They run out and grow to their completeness through days of sunshine or of shadow. But no dusky veil is drawn over the clear sky of Heaven — no wandering film or vapor stains the long bright day of Eternity. Here, amidst our toil, our warfare, and weariness, we need night with its soft and quiet slumber. The waste of the day must be repaired by the still repose of night, and the spirit bathed in dews of forgetfulness, to be refreshed for the morrow’s work. So each day is shut up and

shrouded in its little grave of darkness, as our whole broad life of threescore years and ten contracts at last into the narrow house.

But in the life of Heaven there are no wasted powers, no flagging energies, no weariness, and no slumber. Each worshiper keeps an everlasting vigil of adoration before the throne. No bell rings the hour of prayer. No twilight star kindles its sweet signal for Earth's evening hymn, but the heart times its happy thoughts to the grand movement of Heaven's unresting service. There, in silent watchfulness, or genial communion, or serene activity, it breathes the free, pure, bracing element of a sinless being.

There is no interruption there,—no sorrowful partings—no reluctant severance of pleasant fellowships—no shutting up of sweet and holy chapters of life, with “Arise, let us go hence.” In the Father's house friend has never said to friend, “farewell!” There it is no more “expedient” that Christ should be away. The Son is in the house

for ever, and the Comforter also abides for ever.

There are no dreams there—no blank hours in which the spirit roves through a land of shadows, and mocks itself with its shapeless fancies, and gropes after that which it cannot find. For that is the land of purged vision, and of blest realities—all that the mind can grasp, the heart rest in, and the soul take to itself as an heritage for ever. “In Thy light shall we see light.”

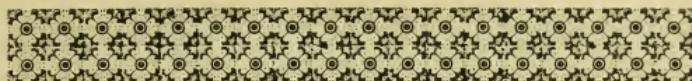
Here, O Christian! thou often walkest in darkness and hast no light. Sin separates between thee and God. Unbelief, like a thick cloud, hides His face from thee. Thou must go by a dark way into the dark valley. But there Sin and Death have passed away, and drawn their shadow—darkness—after them. “The bright and morning Star” now shineth in its strength. Nor is there one lonely place unillumined by its glances, not one lowly heart uncheered by its smile. Hast thou watched with the Saviour one

hour of the night in Gethsemane? Or, when thou shouldst have watched, hast thou slept for sorrow? There thou shalt awake and walk with him in sweet companionship for ever. “The day breaks, and the shadows flee away,” and thou, my soul, art with thy Saviour and thy God alone, as if in the universe there were none besides—yet in a society where all are like him, and all love him, and all are altogether lovely.

“The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”—

Isaiah xxx. 26.





No More Curse.

"There shall be no more curse." — Rev. xxii. 3.

WHAT makes the world a land of exile to him who follows Christ? What gives him the heart of a stranger in passing through it? What but the curse of sin that overshadows it — the burden of sin he bears — knowing that he can not for ever lay it down, till he has passed into the land of holiness and rest.

How different was it once! Then Earth was the abode of purity — the home of all that was blessed and lovely — a suburb of the Celestial City — a gate of the Temple that might be called "Beautiful," through which gleams came from the great glory within, and breathings of angels' songs. But Earth, O man! was "cursed" for thee. Wherever thou goest, this curse has left its

black and bitter trace. Beneath thee—in every worm that writhes, and thorn that stings. Around thee—in every leaf that falls, and flower that fades. About thee—in every storm that darkens heaven, and vapor that breathes pestilence and death. Beside thee—in every form of suffering and sorrow. Within thee—in the “body of sin” which clings to thee and drags down thy spirit, and lies like a weight upon the springs of life. Listen, and thou wilt hear the wail of creation “groaning and travailing in pain”—the creature “made subject” to change and decay, and mourning in sack-cloth, ever since man, its prince and ruler, went into exile and slavery. Look, and thou wilt see the “flying roll” of curses everywhere unfolded—filled, like the prophet’s, with “lamentations, and mourning, and woe.” But that curse will not follow thee into the land whither thou goest. Thou shalt dwell in a better paradise than Adam, for the serpent crept into Eden—in a better

inheritance than the earthly Canaan, for sin entered there. No evil mist will darken the brightness of the sky of heaven. No serpent-trail will sully one of its unwithering flowers. No lingering vestige of corruption will alarm thee—no breath of temptation ruffle the serenity of thy sinless rest.

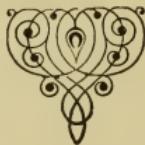
How often here, on earth, has that loud and bitter cry issued from the holiest lips, “Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But there no groan shall be heard, no sorrowful complaint—but the everlasting song, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

And, if lying under this ban of sin, this earth still wears such loveliness—if the desert can bloom and brighten under the sunshine of the Christian’s hope—what a vision of beauty, what a mystery of holy rapture will be his, when he is in the land whence every dark disturbing element has been withdrawn—in “the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Strive, then, against sin ; and while thou strivest, let the painfulness of warfare endear the thought of thy eternal home.

Follow holiness, and while thou followest it, look forward to the blessed certainty that awaits thee—for “He is faithful that hath promised.” Think of the stainless vestment that will be put on thee—emblem of the sinless purity that dwells for ever in the soul—the glory and the beauty that are within.

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.”—Is. lxi. 10.





No More Death.

"There shall be no more death." — Rev. xxi. 4.

HOW often does the thought of the mysterious change that awaits him, cast gloom and heaviness over the Christian's mind! Who can watch the blight, and withering, and defacement of that which was once so fair,— who has seen the suffering, the anguish, the unknown pang in which the spirit tears itself from its tenement, and rends the earthly shroud,— and not felt that it is a bitter tribute we must pay ere we pass into endless life and freedom?

How often have the mists, arising from the gloomy valley through which we must go, hidden from our eyes the view of the better land beyond! Nor, pass where we may, can we escape the sense of this dread pres-

ence, this haunting mystery. Everywhere we see Death reign. Since Abel's grave was digged under the wall of Eden, where has the King of Terrors not left his footprints? On every rod of earth he has reared some ghastly memorial,—in every market-place proclaimed his title,—on every wall set up his banners,—in every garden hewn out a sepulcher. Earth still holds a “place where the Lord lay.” Within each of us those seeds are sown which must lay these bodies in the dust.

And these are the bitter and poisonous fruits of sin. Death came by Sin. Sin mined the citadel, and Death stormed it. And because Sin has struck its roots into his nature, and coiled itself round every fiber of his being, even the heir of spiritual life must be through all his earthly days the bearer of a “body of death.”

But “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” I have seen his empty grave, and the folded shroud. I know that he was dead and is

alive ; that dying, he “destroyed him that had the power of death,” and that living, he will be “the Resurrection and Life” to me ! At his girdle hang “the keys of Hell and Death.” And when the believer falls asleep, a voice from heaven speaks the words heard of old among the tombs of Bethany, “ He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

Blessed assurance ! hope full of immortality ! I shall see his face ; him and not another, in the land where death comes no more. There the fear, the foreboding, the gloom, the mystery shall have passed away. For sin can not enter there ; and with sin, death has perished, and every evil thing that was here a type and shadow of death.

And there the heritage of eternal life will be mine. The crown of life will be mine. Through endless ages stretching before me in clear bright prospect, I shall know that there will be no change, no parting, no de-

cay, no death, because no sin. All through that love, whose first step was from the throne to Calvary ; and the next, from Calvary to the grave.

The stone is rolled away from the sepulcher of all who believe. My Saviour has left the prints of his feet in the dark valley, from end to end, and made it the highway to the everlasting kingdom. Let me wait prayerfully, and work diligently “ all the days of my appointed time.” And when this frail tent of earth loosens, and shrinks, and falls, may I pass forth from it, as Peter from his prison, wakened by an angel, and find myself standing in a trance of joy on the street of the new Jerusalem !

“ For we know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” —

2 Cor. v. 1.



No Temple There.

"I saw no temple therein." — Rev. xxi. 22.

IT was the new Jerusalem, "coming down out of heaven from God," with its girdle of jasper walls, and its coronal of glittering towers, that the apostle saw from the Mount of Vision. He thought of his own Jerusalem, and of the streets where he had walked with his Lord, and the temple where he had heard his voice; and the eye of the confessor of Patmos, long separated from his brethren, with his calendar of silent Sabbaths notched week after week in an exile's memory, would wander over the mass of stately buildings to mark the temple, uplifted in that element of purple clearness. If so fair the city, how glorious must be the shrine!

He sees "no temple therein" — no sacred

and guarded spot—no visible center and crowning point of glory. There is no place in all that shining city of God “four square” and “compact together,” of which it might be said, Here stand and worship with unsandaled feet, for this is holy ground! For what he sees is a city, and a temple likewise—a city wherein each citizen is a king—a temple wherein each worshiper is an anointed priest—a holy city, at once the home and sanctuary of the royal priesthood of Eternity. How must he, who had prayed toward Jerusalem, have longed to pass through gates each called “Beautiful”—and take part in that high office of devotion; to have each day a Lord’s Day with its one changeless vision of the Son of Man.

How should it cheer the Christian’s spirit, when in sickness, or lonesomeness, at a distance from the sanctuary, or worshiping in these lower courts with a cold wandering heart, that yet a little while, and that temple will be his dwelling-place, and all his being

consecrated to holy service and priestly ministrations. If “one day in his courts is better than a thousand,” what will a thousand be in the land where all time shrinks to a twinkling point, and the lifetime of a world marks not a hair-breadth on the dial?

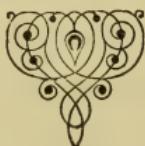
Once there he dwells for ever in the presence of God, and in the love of Christ, and in the communion of the Holy Ghost, and in the fellowship of the saints. “For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” No more pilgrimage, for “they are now before the throne of God.” No silent Sabbaths, for day and night they praise him. No check and intermission to holy worship, for they “dwell in the secret place of the Most High.” No ordinances, no imagery, no sacraments, no hours of prayer, no written word, for Christ standeth no more “behind the lattice-work” of symbolism, but “looketh forth clear as the sun” and showeth himself “face to face.” For ordinances, they have perpetual communion;

for sacraments, open vision ; for hours of prayer, an unceasing festival of praise ; for a witnessing Spirit, a manifested Saviour ; for the written oracles, the living voice.

The Lord's Prayer of Eternity is fulfilled, as all are gathered into the temple of his spiritual presence, to go out no more.

“ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”—

John xvii. 21, 23.





The Open Gates.

"The gates of it shall not be shut." — Rev. xxi. 25.

THINE eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation." Here the Christian dwells as in a guarded fortress, a beleaguered city, with enemies around him, exposed to continual alarms. Armed and vigilant, he must stand upon his guard. He must watch against foes without, who never slumber ; and watch as sleeplessly against foes within. The "evil heart of unbelief" is as a traitor within the citadel. But there, in the better country, he dwells in a "peaceable habitation, and in a sure dwelling, and in a quiet resting-place."

"There is neither adversary, nor evil occurrent." He has "finished his course ; he has fought the fight ; he has kept the faith." He has rendered up his armor, his watch-word, his trust, unto God. He rests in God,

and “the everlasting arms” are around him, to keep him from fear of evil.

The heavenly city has gates and walls for beauty, not security. “Violence shall no more be heard in thy land; wasting, nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates, Praise.” The glory of the Lord is its defense. It needs no battlement, and no brazen gate. It is open, but guarded as the camp of the chosen tribes in the desert, when the fiery pillar shone upon the tents of Jacob,—as the wide border of Canaan, along which angels stood sentinels, during the keeping of the solemn feasts.

Here, walking amidst thick-sown perils, breathing a poisoned air, and tried by a treacherous heart, how often does the believer feel as if he walked in chains. He is laden with a heavy burden, and his spirit is often crushed in the dust by grievous bondage. Yet even now, “looking unto Jesus,” with what gladness he feels the darkness, the

weight, the thralldom, at times removed; and learns, that when he walks most "under law to Christ," he walks most "at liberty."

But what a blessed sense of freedom, and enlargement, and stirring energy, will be his in the Jerusalem above! "The gates are never shut." There, like a trusted child, he can roam through all the chambers of his Father's dwelling, through the fair lands and gardens of his heritage. Like the heir of a royal line, he can visit at will all the cities and provinces of the kingdom. No restraint shackles the movements of his freeborn spirit. No fear trammels his light step. No doubt casts a fleeting stain on the clear mirror of his soul, to dim the image of his loving Father. He is free to all the worlds of his sovereignty, the starry mansions of his Father's house; free to all the realms of his spiritual kingdom. The bright "name on his forehead" opens to him all its glories and resources. The principalities of heaven honor the blood-bought privilege of the heir

of salvation. He shall “go in and out,” and wherever he goes, find nurture for his fervent powers, and glean materials for adoring contemplation. For all that was pure, and lovely, and excellent on earth, is gathered there. “The kings of the earth have brought their glory and honor to it.” Prophets are there. Martyrs are there. Apostles are there. Angels are there. Christ is there. God is there.

“Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.”

Heb. xii. 22-24.





The Holy Service.

"They serve Him day and night in His temple."—
Rev. vii. 15.

BLESSED are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee." Day and night (as we speak on earth, for "there is no night there"), through the bright unbroken watches of eternity, they serve God in his temple. They sit not now by the gate; they stand not in the porches; they minister in the outer court no more. They are within the vail, in the presence of the Most High, swinging the golden censer, and striking the full-toned harp of their praises.

If, here on earth, one day in His courts was better than a thousand, what will it be when God's waiting saints are called to the great gathering and festival in the heavens?

“As the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” When He to whom a thousand years are as one day—a thousand cycles a fleeting second of eternity—says “long,” he sets the seal and consecration of his own infinite being upon their blessedness.

Here we can not, if we would, be constantly employed in the service of God. Our bodies faint through weariness; our minds flag and fail in a prolonged concentration of their powers. And how many evil influences are at work within our souls to distract and overpower them! How many worldly thoughts and anxieties flutter over our minds at the still hour of devotion, or in the house of God, like the birds descending on Abraham’s sacrifice!

But how far otherwise will it be when we enter on the keeping of that Sabbath to which this mortal life is but the “evening of preparation”! Then, there will be no lan-

guishing nor faintness,—no inertness and no cessation,—no heart wandering after vanity, no soul cleaving to the dust; but a holy service of God, in which the spirit will find at once its exercise and its refreshment. There the air it breathes, the pure element of light in which it lives, will minister strength and alacrity to its swift elastic powers. It will soar to heights of holy contemplation, balancing itself on calm ethereal wings, and floating on in unutterable joy. “In waiting on the Lord it will renew (or *transform*) its strength,” passing by a swift ascension into higher circles of service, as it dilates from within to larger capacities of blessedness.

What the nature of these employments may be, we know not. We know they will be worthy of spiritual bodies and sinless minds. How gladly will they see the secret course of Providence unveiled, the bright devices of that plan which seemed here so raveled and perplexing! How intently will

they watch the unfolding mystery of grace, and tell to principalities and powers what it is to feel and return a Saviour's love! With what rapture gaze on the flashing rays of the "many-colored wisdom of God," or the softened splendor of his attributes in the rainbow like an emerald round the throne! A ceaseless but ever-varied course of sacred services, in which their being will glide on from joy to joy, and their natures advance from strength to strength, and the glorified intelligence climb ever up from round to round of that shining ladder which rests its foot on the marble pavement, and hides its summit in light ineffable!

"Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." —

Daniel xii. 13.





The Unceasing Song.

“They sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb.”—
Rev. xv. 3.

THEY stand on that calm crystal sea, a white-robed company, gathered safe into the Father’s house. No enemy can vex them now; the rough winds of their trial blow no more for ever. They stand with peace in their hearts, with light upon their faces, and thanksgiving on their lips. For there is not one there who can not speak of a great danger and a great deliverance, of a hard warfare and a glorious victory.

Each one holds a golden harp. Each voice sings to the music of these heavenly instruments, “Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” And as he sings, he thinks of the “great

works" that have been done for him, of the "true ways" by which he has been led through the wilderness to his home.

Let these sweet consenting voices — these bursts and gushes of ethereal melody — reach thy heart, O soldier of the cross, and breathe a fresh spirit into thy holy warfare! What thou art, these heavenly singers once were. What they are, thou, when these troublous times are over, wilt be. As they sing of trial and victory, so wilt thou, when thou takest off thine armor and puttest on thy festal garments. Thou too wilt strike thy harp in symphony with their ringing halleluiyahs. Thy voice will blend with the exulting song of praise to Him who loved thee and washed thee from thy sin — the song which angels can not sing, and to which they listen as a strain of thanksgiving beyond their powers.

Think then, when thou art in the storm of adversity, where "deep calleth unto deep," how gladly thou wilt sing the song

of Moses on the other side. Thy foes may pursue thee, but the Lord fights for thee. The pillar of cloud and fire is between thee and them. The Saviour's voice whispers in the darkness, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." Thou must be baptized with his baptism of trial "in the cloud and in the sea." He will "compass thee about," even here, "with songs of deliverance;" and there, the memory of thy peril and thy terror will give more fullness and fervor to thy psalm of triumph.

And will not one Name be uppermost in thy praises—his, who loved thee, and died for thee, and lives for thee, and guides thee with a gentle hand to thy home, and comforts thee with the sweet words of his promises by the way?

Not in thine own might and power, but in his, wilt thou be kept from falling, and upholden to the end. In his strength thou art to strive; in his love to obey; in his

faithfulness to trust that thou wilt be kept
“ faithful unto death.”

As thou goest through the wilderness,
“ lean ” on him. As thou runnest the race,
“ look ” to him. Think of the “ great cloud
of witnesses ” that compass thee about, and
let their songs and thanksgivings tell thee
that they so looked and trusted and over-
came. “ By the blood of the Lamb, and the
word of their testimony,” they stood fast in
the evil day, and have won the crown of
life. Therefore they sing—

“ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and
riches and wisdom and strength and honor
and glory and blessing.”—

Rev. v. 12.





The Beatific Vision.

"They shall see his face." — Rev. xxii. 4.

THE face of God! the brightness of that uncreated glory whereon none can look and live, before which worshiping "angels veil their faces with their wings."

It was only the shadow of that glory which Moses saw,—the outer folds, the waving skirts and fringes of the light in which He dwells,—what the blue and purple curtains of the tabernacle were to the luminous Shekinah-cloud within.

What a mystery of blessedness will be the heritage of the redeemed! The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the mightiest of prophets. To each it will be given to "stand in the cleft of the rock," and behold the light of that transforming vision,—the clearness, the splendor and "self-

infolding fire," pass before him. Each will hear the voice that proclaims his goodness along the ages of eternity.

How quickly do the brightest glimpses we have here of the favor of God, and the love of Christ, and things "eternal in the heavens," pass away! The bright vision grows dim and fades from us; or rather, our weak sight and unstable hearts can not hold it long. Like the great sheet filled with living forms let down before Peter in his trance, it is drawn up again into heaven.

At times we see in spiritual things a glory and beauty which things around us do not possess. We feel attracted and uplifted by them. We could wish to build a tabernacle on the calm bright summits from which we have seen "the land that is very far off." But the elements of the world "bring us again into bondage." The earthly overshadows and shuts out the heavenly. The evil influences that set so strongly, like contrary currents in the soul, gather strength

again, and draw away our thoughts and longings into lower channels.

But there we shall “arise and walk in the light of the Lord.” We shall “see his face.” In his glory we shall behold the fullness and consummation of his grace. We shall rest in the calm assurance of his favor, and have clearer insight into the excellencies of his nature, and look into the deep thoughts of the infinite mind.

We shall see the face of Jesus; and though nothing more were told us of heaven’s glory, this would be enough. It was enough for him who saw the visions of God. To John it was a dearer remembrance that he leaned on the Saviour’s bosom, than that he looked through the door opened in heaven, and heard those harpings and sevenfold hallelujahs. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

To be with him, for ever, whom we love;

to see that face radiant with grace, which was wet with Gethsemane's sweat of blood ; that brow, on which are “many crowns,” wearing the mark of the crown of thorns. Oh ! if here the faint shining of his countenance gives so much gladness, what will the unclouded brightness of it be ? To see a height yet unscaled, a breadth yet unmeasured, a depth yet unsounded in his love — will be the beatific vision and endless joy of the redeemed. The knowledge of a “love that passeth knowledge” is the Apocalypse of Eternity.

“ Now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face :
now I know in part ; but then shall I know
even as also I am known.” —

1 Cor. xiii. 12.





The Shining Mark.

" His name shall be in their foreheads." — Rev. xxii. 4.

BELoved, now are we the sons of God." Thus the apostle points the believer's eye beyond the dark and troubled scenes of life to his glorious heritage of hopes, to the privileges of his heavenly birth.

Here there is no outward sign to strike the world's eye, that such a name and lineage are his. No device blazoned on shield or banner, no jeweled star upon the breast, marks out the nobility of heaven. They are princes in disguise, as was their Lord before them. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." And will they court smiles where he met with frowns ? Will they think it strange or hard that those hands will not weave a garland for them which twisted the crown of thorns

for him? Their "citizenship is in heaven," and no earthly parchment or royal seal attests it. And as his enemies would not see in the Christian apostle the citizen of Rome, the world can not see in the simple guise of the Christian, "walking humbly with his God," one who is free to "the Jerusalem that is above," "a citizen of no mean city."

But the day is coming when there will be a "manifestation" of the sons of God. The mean disguise of their humiliation will be stripped aside. The heirs of the kingdom will take place and rank after their long exile. They will be transfigured as beseems their ancestry, with brightness on their faces, and their Father's name in their foreheads. Each will bear that superscription, and reflect that image,—he that is lowest in the kingdom, as well as he who is highest. One star may differ from another star in glory, but the rays of each will hold that sacred cipher.

The common vessels in the Lord's house shall be like "the golden bowls before the altar," each bearing the legend, "Holiness to the Lord." For in the bright name on their foreheads, there is the seal of their spiritual purity, the token of their Father's favor, the pledge of "glory and honor and immortality."

Here they bear "the marks of the Lord Jesus," not in visible imprint, not in fleshly wounds, as those bleeding marks which have been fabled of visionaries of the cloister. They bear them in chastened affections, in lowly lives, in crucified tempers and desires, in Christ-like "meekness and gentleness." It is such a life as his who said, "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world," that has the mark of the spiritual cross.

But then, when they are with the Lord, the bright sign of their high calling will be clearly seen. The outward glory will be in measure as the inward holiness. The name without will be a witnessing index to the

deep and blessed experience within, of a “peace with God” which “passeth understanding.” Nor will that symbol of royal honor and priestly consecration ever grow dim or fade away. “Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.”

Each, in his own place in the heavenly city, will be one of its perpetual ornaments, “for glory and for beauty.” Each, in that shining seal upon his forehead, will show his oneness with Christ, and all together the completeness of the family of which he is the head. For “on him shall they hang all the glory of his Father’s house,” and he shall bear it uninjured and untarnished for ever.

“Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of thy
God.” — Isaiah lxii. 3.



The Great Multitude.

“A great multitude, which no man could number.” —
Rev. vii. 9.

HOW would it cheer the apostle, one of the few standard-bearers of the faith, and now severed from the communion of the saints, to behold this great congregation of worshipers, to hear their voices blending round the throne “like the sound of many waters!”

How often is the Christian’s mind weighed down with heaviness, when separated from his brethren in sickness or solitude; or when, in the common intercourse of life, he finds few to sympathize with his sorrows and hopes! Let him not think concerning this trial, that any “strange thing” has happened to him. His Master was alone; and “as he was, so are we in this world.” Yet

as he said, “not alone, because the Father is with me;” so where one disciple stands weeping for the Lord, or two walk together and speak of him, does he come to revive their drooping hearts.

Each of these heavenly worshipers passed through the same sorrowful experience on earth. Each had to “fill up” his own measure of “the afflictions of Christ,” that he might thus be made “conformable unto his death.” What mysteries of spiritual trouble did these hearts once shut up within them! By what dark and strange ways were they led; but this is the end,—“Therefore are they before the throne of God.” Each in his own time struggled through the mists and glooms of his pilgrimage, to emerge at last into the shadowless light of eternity.

“These are they which came out of great tribulation.” The first human spirit that ever ascended there left its body bleeding upon earth. And one after another, those who like “righteous Abel” have been

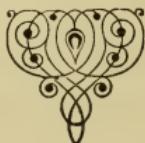
tried and found faithful, have followed him to glory. Each, like his Lord, has been a “man of sorrows.” Not an eye there that has not wept, or looked up in tearless anguish. Not a heart but has well-nigh broken in an agony of prayer. Not a spirit that has not been torn with deep and bitter wounds. In all its forms of sickness or grief, poverty or pain, reproach or slighting, temptation or darkness, or deadly trouble, affliction has pressed upon them. Each has borne his solitary burden, and felt that his were sorrows wherewith “a stranger doth not intermeddle.”

How different is it now! Each, purified by suffering, has “come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to God, and to Jesus Christ.” How different their view of trial, when they were “perplexed, though not despairing, cast down, though not destroyed.” Each was bitter at the time, but it has left

an enduring sweetness. Each prepared them for their inheritance and rest. Each made heaven more welcome when it came. And now they are all assembled there, one family in Christ. Called “from every nation and kindred and people and tongue;”—they are one in name, one in speech, one in worship, one in love.

And the same hand that upheld them, and brought them out of tribulation, can sustain thee, and deliver thee from thine. Thou hast the same Saviour, the same word of promise:—

“In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye have peace. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”—John xvi. 33.





The White Robes.

"Clothed with white robes." — Rev. vii. 9.

IF it seem strange to connect the thought of "great tribulation" with that concourse of blessed worshipers, it may seem even more strange to think that theirs, now a state of saintly purity, was once a state of sin. But the thought is not strange to their minds. They have not forgotten, they have no wish to forget, what they were.

They could not be ashamed of this remembrance without being ashamed of their Saviour's love, and his dying anguish, and the blood of atonement. If upon the throne he is still the "Lamb as it had been slain," they can not behold him without the thought, "Slain for us!" If he has not forgotten Bethlehem and Galilee and Gethsemane and Calvary, no more do they forget the

days when, under the burden and guilt of sin, they first looked to the cross, and felt that his blood flowed there to atone and to purify. Therefore they sing, “Glory unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

For if each of that white-robed company has come out of “great tribulation,” each has been redeemed from grievous bondage. Sin, indeed, was the secret root of their sorrow. Wherever suffering is, sin has gone before it, as the shadow follows the moving cloud. And if the robes of their holy service are white and glistening, they can not look at them without thinking of their former stains. They are “washed”—not one speck now sullies their immaculate purity; but their hands have not cleansed them. No penitential tears could thus have washed them; no life-blood of willing martyrdom; no baptismal waters; no sacramental grace. They came as sinners, and washed in the fountain which God has opened, and the

blood of God's Son has filled,—that sacred laver in the court of the temple, which alone avails to the purifying of the conscience and the spirit.

Difficult it is for us to think of them, lifted now so high above our low-thoughted region of fears and sorrows, as once crushed under the bondage of sin, and the tyranny of a selfish will, and the "evil heart of unbelief." But so it was. They have known the strife with temptation, the strength of the world, the weakness of the flesh, "fightings without and fears within." Sin vexed and saddened them all their days. As they became more holy in life, more spiritual in mind, they were more quick of sight to detect sin, more sensitive of conscience to shrink from it.

The whiter the garment, the darker shows the smallest stain on it. The higher they climbed up their rugged and saintly path, the lower did they lie before their God. And when, to those toiling in the valley,

they seemed to stand on a serene eminence of faith in clear sunlight, and were called “chief of saints,” they could only think what grace had done, and call themselves “chief of sinners.” For the highest point of Christian attainment is that from which one has the clearest view of Christ’s worth and his own unworthiness. But now they are with pure hearts and white raiment before the throne.

And as a “cloud of witnesses,” they behold us striving as once they strove, weeping as once they wept, praying as once they prayed. Let their example bid us be of good cheer. Let the luminous track they have left behind — that “path of the just,” which is “as the shining light,” be ours. Like them, let us “look off” from the false shows and images of time, which would beguile us of our reward, and look steadfastly unto Jesus.

“Not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” —Heb. vi. 12.



The Palms of Victory.

“With palms in their hands.” — Rev. vii. 9.

IT was not merely a congregation of worshipers that the apostle saw in that white-robed multitude, but an army of warriors rejoicing when the fight is over, and the victory won. Each had not only to endure tribulation, but to resist subtle forces of evil at work within him and without him. He had to strive against that spiritual substance, from which dark shadows of temptation were thrown forward on his soul. “Not with flesh and blood do we wrestle, but with principalities and powers.”

For the white robes, each was once arrayed in bruised and dinted armor. For the palm of victory, he grasped the sword. Through all the days of his earthly sojourning, the warfare lasted. Often was he ready

to faint through weariness, often daunted by the great company that was leagued against him,—“spiritualities of wickedness” swarming about his path, ambushed in his very thoughts. But through the grace of Christ he persevered, and in his strength he overcame.

Often did he look for the evening shadow that was to call him from the tumult of the fight, but it did not come till death came. As long as life beat within him, that life was a struggle, and a discipline of hardness. Not till the golden bowl was broken, the sword of his warfare lay shivered beside it, and the weary soldier was borne home by angels to his rest.

He has “fought the good fight; he has finished his course, and kept the faith,” and the everlasting gates are thrown open. Angels chant before him the psalm of victory. Saints throng around him with words of welcome. His Father smiles “Well done!” His Lord, “the righteous Judge,” gives

him the reward of faithful service, and he stands

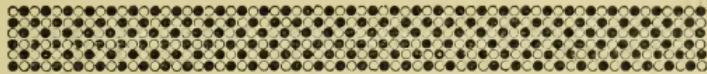
“ With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly.”

And now he looks back from his rest on the rough and toilsome track through which he fought his way, and wonders that he was often ready to faint and fail. How often did he doubt the Saviour’s love at the very moment that love upheld him ; and distrust the issue, when the Saviour’s death and life together assured him of the victory. He has received the reward of victory now ; but through Christ he was victorious, even then. For once that sacred bond of faith knits us to our unseen Lord, “ what or who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? ” “ Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” “ More than conquerors,” for he says, “ Be

of good cheer, I have overcome the world." "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," that He, the Captain of salvation, has for all his followers overcome.

The earthly conqueror knows that through his own strength he must overcome, but the Christian, "more than conqueror," knows that Christ has already overcome. The earthly conqueror can not gain a victory without losses, but the Christian is "more than conqueror," because all his losses turn to gains. The earthly conqueror can not carry the fruits of his victories to the grave, but the Christian is "more than conqueror," for they follow him up to glory. There first he receives the crown, the robe, the unwithering palm; and all eternity is the feast of his triumph.

"I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." — Psalm xiii. 5.



The City's Glory.

"Having the glory of God."—Rev. xxi. 11.

GLORIOUS things are spoken of thee, O city of God!" but this is the sum and fulfillment of them all. Even in this cloudy and glimmering time,—this season of twilight views and shadowy glimpses,—thou shinest, O Zion! as a light in this dark world.

And better days are in reserve for thee on earth than any thou hast seen as yet, when it will be said, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Blessed hope, that revives the believer's heart, when "iniquity abounds," and "love waxeth cold," and the cause of God is depressed, and the light of living godliness is weak and low, as if the lamp were going out in the temple!

And how often does thine own lamp burn

dim, O Christian ! in this damp and heavy atmosphere of earth ? How often, in the hour of strong temptation, does a gloom, "a horror of great darkness," seem to fall with a deadly chill upon thy spirit ! Or insensibly, through the insidious power of an evil world, thou art beguiled to slumber.

Thy spirit falls short of the high reach of earlier desire and aim,—the spring-tide fullness and overflow of feeling ebbs,—and, ere thou art aware, "thou hast left thy first love," and "the things which remain are ready to die."

And then, when gloom and sorrow and self-reproach have followed the season of declension, what joy is thine when "the day-spring from on high" revisits thy soul, and "the Sun of Righteousness rises, with healing in his wings." Then the prayer of Moses is thine, "Lord, show me thy glory ;" and the faint glimpses of it which are given thee, how do they gladden the spirit and disperse the mists that overhung it !

But what will it be, when thou dwellest in the noontide light and clearness of the glory of God,—when thou art a priest and worshiper in the heavenly temple? There it is no Shekinah, no luminous symbol, that marks his presence; but that Presence, in unvailed splendor, is itself there, shining in constant communications of love and favor,—streaming forth in glorious sun-bursts of life and blessedness and joy.

If to Moses it was a sufficient promise, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;” what will it be when that presence shall rest on thee, and overshadow thee, and hold thee in, and fold thee about for ever?

If David had more gladness put into his heart by one gleam of light from God’s countenance than all earthly blessings could impart, what will it be when that light flows in upon thee without check or dimness? when all the affections and capacities of a holy being are filled with light and gladness

to the brim? The Saviour's face will ever shine on thee. The Father's glory will be ever seen upon thee. All darkness will be chased away from thy mind,—all fear and heaviness from thy heart. There will be “no part dark,” but, to the innermost region of the spirit, a blessed and inspiring sense of life and freedom and peacefulness. There will be no presentiment nor foretaste there, but perfect and full-orbed enjoyment. No “appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord;” but a vision which will be a transformation into “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!”

“Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

Isaiah lx. 20.





The City's Light.

"The Lamb is the light thereof." — Rev. xxi. 23.

ALL the light that shines on the pilgrim's path, as he goes on his way to the far-off city of his rest, is light from Him, "the brightness of the Father's glory," — "Immanuel, God with us."

All light that in this dark world illuminates the mind, and cheers the heart, and brings the realities of heaven more near and vivid to the spirit, is light that dwells in him as its center, and streams from him as its source. Life, gladness, healing, and purity, reach and fall upon the soul out of heaven, in the clear shining of "the bright and morning star." So sweet the grace, so high the blessing, that "having not seen" him, save in the spiritual revelation of faith, it "loves him, and believing, rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

But oh, what joy unspeakable will that be, when the soul enters into light unspeakable, and is possessed wholly of that light! What earthly gladness can shadow that which will flow in upon it, when, “caught up into paradise,” it sees the glory of heaven gathered up and concentrated in the glorified humanity of Christ. It is one “like unto the Son of man,” who stands a great light in the midst of heaven, and all his saints like lesser lights move round him in their courses, shining in the brightness they receive from him.

For it is as the Lamb that he is the light of heaven. As the once suffering Redeemer, now Prince and Head of God’s unsuffering kingdom, he is there “highly exalted” and “crowned with glory and honor.” To each of his redeemed, the face that was bright on Tabor is not more beautiful than that which grew dark on Calvary. The “visage once marred more than any man,” is all the fairer now for their remembrance of its passion and

pain. Heaven takes its glory from him, for they can see nothing there but in the light of him who is “altogether lovely.” Each golden plate and jeweled corner-stone throws back his image, gleams and sparkles in his light; and all precious things are cast into the mold and fused together to make up an image of that affluence of glory which his presence showers over heaven.

It is because “the Lamb is the light thereof,” that “the light of the city is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal.” For what constellation of material splendors would be to the redeemed so glorious as the vision of the Lord?—so fair as one glance of that eye—one look of that countenance, which changes them into the same image? No need to them of sun or moon. These are but torches that burned dimly in the night-watches, but go out on the breaking of the day,—glimmering lamps at the outer gate of God’s house, that may be quenched when

the guests are met and the high festival begun.

Let the thought cheer thee, O believer! amidst “the sufferings of this present time,” that such glory will yet be revealed, and revealed in thee. Here thou often “walkest in darkness and hast no light.” Thy Lord may be hidden from thy sight, or thou beholdest him, “but not nigh.” But there thou shalt walk all the day “in the light of his countenance.” “In thy Light shall we see light,” and shine “all glorious within,” knowing as we are known; loving also, in our measure, as we are loved. “As for me, I will behold thy face in peace; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.”

“The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” — Isaiah lx. 19.



The Twelve Foundations.

"The wall of the city had twelve foundations."—
Rev. xxi. 14.

THE Seer beheld these foundations laid in twelve massive tiers or courses, undergirding the holy city beneath the jasper wall, clasping it round and round in solid and burnished coils, as of adamant. And in these jeweled stones, cut in luminous ciphers, so as to be plain to all who drew near, were "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." What a recompense for life-long trial, when John saw his own name, branded in the earthly Jerusalem, thus blazoned on the wall of the Jerusalem above!

Not through eminent merit, or shining graces, are these names there, but as "apostles of the Lamb." These are they which

"followed the Lamb" whithersoever he went. They heard his voice, and loved his ways, and learned of him who was "meek and lowly;" and when he died, and rose again, and went up to heaven, they went forth in the power of his promise and spiritual presence, and preached over the world salvation through his blood.

These first received the baptism of fire. These were the first heralds of the cross. In the simple truths of the gospel which they first uttered, they laid the foundations of the City of God. "The church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." And it is meet that on the lowest stone of the spiritual temple their names should be preserved in everlasting remembrance.

Here, O Christian men! behold the deep-hewn foundations of your hope. Learn how safe and inviolate is the charter of your inheritance. That hope is based on

the living rock of truth, the faithful word of him who is “the Truth.” Bless God for the glorious and unperplexing simplicities of the gospel. Cling to its elemental sayings, its plain verities. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” “Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.” “Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” How rich that field of truth wherein no foot can wander without striking on some such golden vein of mercy!

Yours is a “city which hath foundations,” “a kingdom which can not be moved,” “an inheritance which fadeth not away,” “a tabernacle which will not be taken down.” Amidst the false and wavering shadows of Time, “you have in heaven a better and more enduring substance.” “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath such recompense of reward.” Be ye “steadfast and unmovable” likewise.

These “foundations were garnished with

all manner of precious stones." But what is mingling radiance of sapphire and topaz, of amethyst and chrysoprase, to the glory of God, to the vision of the Saviour? Yet these are there, all that earth holds excellent and precious; and the loveliness even of earth should lead you to discern, in material elements and forms, types and similitudes of heaven. If such the embroidery of the footstool, what must be the splendor of the throne! Surely the almond-knobs and lily-work that wreath the door-posts of the temple, the fair adorning of God's outer courts, should make you long to "see his power and his glory," so as only they are seen in the sanctuary above.

"Oh, send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
and to thy tabernacles." —

Psalm xlivi. 3.





The Crystal Sea.

"They stand on the sea of glass." — Rev. xv. 2.

IT is "through much tribulation" that the Christian must enter the kingdom of God. Through "windy storm and tempest," through rough and swelling waters, he must keep his onward way. How often tossed upon a sea of troubles, trembling for weakness in the grasp of a strong temptation, or dragging his slow steps from sorrow unto sorrow, does he say, "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I sink in deep ooze, where there is no standing." "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." How often, like the apostle's prison ship, struck by the storm-wind Euroclydon, and "driven up and down in Adria," is there no resource in the deep

night and under starless skies, but to cast forth his anchors and wait for the day.

And now that day is springing, and there is a great calm. He has passed through the rude waves of his tribulation. The days of his fear and struggling and strong crying are ended. From the perils of these worldly seas he has “escaped safe to land.” What an emblem of rest and quietness and security has each of the redeemed before his eyes and under his feet. He stands on “the sea of glass,”—the crystal pavement, that stretches far away into shining distance before the throne. As if the expanse of the shoreless ocean, unruffled by a breath, had been so fixed for ever, and charmed into everlasting stillness. They stand on this “sea” with “quietness and assurance,” as their heritage for ever. They are taken up into a great tranquillity, “perfect peace” around them, and within them a harmonious calm. A blessed trance, in which their eyes are open, and the heart silently fills with joy, as a

vessel at a fountain. Their life is now “the keeping of a Sabbath.” They have “entered into rest,” and “ceased from their own works, as God did from his.” They are at rest from trial and temptation, from watches and alarms, from evil spirits and wicked men, from strife and violence and clamor, from rough winds and swelling waters and toilsome ways. In this sense, there is “no more sea” (xxi. 1). The “noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people,” are stilled by him who “sitteth King upon the flood.”

No restless passion troubles the grave and settled mind. Each soul possesses itself in strength and confidence. Each is kept, “like a city that is compact together,” by a “peace which passeth understanding.” No vexing thought hovers over the clear spirit, to cast the smallest shadow from its wing; no breath of evil ruffles the serenity of the holy heart. All passions and affections and desires are still in the presence of God, as

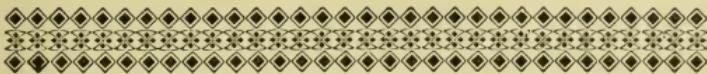
Solomon's brazen sea in the court of the temple.

The apostle saw this sea of glass "mingled with fire," as if the reflection of the seven lamps, ever burning before the throne, was visible in its crystal deeps, in dazzling veins and streaks of brightness. A symbol, it might be, of God's abiding presence in the glorified soul. For each will in his place reflect his glory — each will be a mirror of the uncreated Excellence. Each, in his deep peace, will have as deep a joy in the vision of God. And the Spirit of God will dwell and move in each as fire ; not now to search and purify, but to keep their love and fervor up to the fullest strain of their ethereal powers.

"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ;
but my kindness shall not depart from thee,
neither shall the covenant of my

peace be removed." —

Isaiah liv. 10.



The Emerald Rainbow.

"A rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."—Rev. iv. 3.

WHAT John now sees in Patmos resembles what Ezekiel saw by Chebar; but there is one point of difference. The Hebrew prophet saw the firmament of "the terrible crystal," and the sapphire-colored throne, and the mystic Appearance, and the beautiful arch of fire, "as the likeness of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain." But there it was an amber-tinted halo that arched the throne,—an angry and threatening brightness; for God had prepared his throne for judgment.

Here the brilliant coronal is wreathed of a soft and tempered light,—"a rainbow, in sight like unto an emerald; for God is sitting on the throne of grace. This blessed

sign is bended round the throne by the hands of God, in token of love and hope and reconciliation,—the sweet symbol of the covenant of everlasting peace.

It is God in Christ, O trembling heart of faith! who sits for thee on the throne of heaven. All his majesty now throws luster on his mercy; and in the light of his mercy, in the face of Jesus, thou beholdest all his bright perfections, and canst worship him “in the beauty of holiness.” Only because the Mediator stands before the throne, and the way through the vail is sprinkled with his blood, hast thou freedom of access and sureness of acceptance and sweetness of communion.

How pleasant, when the thunder-cloud drifts from the sky, and the clear blue light is streaming cool through its rents, and the green summer-fields sparkle with dewy freshness, and the rain-scented thickets of bloom send pulses of fragrance through the air, to see the rainbow fling its glittering loop round

the somber vault, and open its seven stripes of color out of the storm, like some beautiful flower of light! You see in it the holy emblem of God's covenant with man,—Love's device blazoned on Heaven's everlasting shield,—the signal-flag of hope and peace flying high in the tempest. All the secret hues of light are there, braided and woven, to vivify the type to the eye and heart of man. But in the "rainbow round the throne," all colors seem to mingle and flow into one, and that the softest and most refreshing to the eye. It is Earth's chosen color,—the household dress of our common mother,—the emerald tint of spring, on which we love to look, and can look longest.

Thus drawing near to the throne of God in Christ, we see, in the bright display of his mercy, the blended splendor of his holiness and wisdom and truth and power. In the grace "that bringeth salvation," we behold all the attributes of glory meet and mingle and harmonize. The Father's eye

saw the brilliant halo that hung round the Cross of Calvary, and with it he has arched his throne; and his mercy, thus glorified, is “unto all and upon all them that believe.” How blessed now to see all his holy perfections in seeing his mercy, to look through that mercy to the mild and chastened splendor of his glory, to think that in the innermost center of the sapphire light there is a heart beating with love and tenderness to man. For God is not in the earthquake and whirlwind and fire, as he is in the still small voice, interpreted by Christ, the living Word. And there for ever, at the burning core and heart of that great splendor, sitteth God in Christ, the beatific Vision of the glorified.

“Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.” — Isaiah xii. 1.





The Seven Lamps.

"Seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne." —
Rev. iv. 5.

IT was no massive candlestick, as in the Jewish temple, wrought by cunning hand, in shaft and bowl, of beaten gold, and embossed with delicate knop and flower. Rather a constellation of living fires, burning up from ethereal springs, shedding mystic radiance on the throne, and underneath on the crystal sea.

For "these are the seven Spirits of God," the One Divine Spirit in sevenfold fullness of gift, and sevenfold diversity of operation, — One glorious Person repeating the image of his infinite perfection in the seven mirrors of the type. There he shows forth his glory before the throne, as worthy with the Father and Son to be worshiped and glorified.

There he is now, radiating light and grace and vital energy to the hearts of men ; the Spirit of truth glorifying Christ by revealing to the soul his image, and assimilating the soul, by his indwelling presence, to that which he reveals. He is there, amidst the “lightnings and thunderings and voices” that issue from the throne, shining a calm, a clear, and silent fire. For serene Wisdom touches the secret springs of Providence. Peace is at the heart of all its agitations, and light upon the inner edges of all its clouds. These lights burn on, and tremble not for earthly wind or air.

How often, brethren of the faith ! do God’s ways in the great world without, and the little world within us, seem dark and strange. “Clouds and darkness are round about him.” Our eyes can not pierce them, and the lamp of faith burns dim, and the mists come down and settle upon our unquiet hearts. But still the “seven lamps” burn before the throne. These mists and vapors

are for us, not for him. He speaks to us from "the cloudy pillar," and says, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

And "before the throne" these lamps will ever burn. They shall never be quenched,—never grow dim and die,—for with the Father and Son, the Holy Spirit lives and reigns for ever and ever. These guiding lights of Time will shine, the great watch-lamps of Eternity. Their holy splendor will mingle with the beams of God's countenance, and the rays of his glory streaming from the face of Jesus Christ.

Nothing that is evil and earthly lives within their range. All heat of passion, all flame of discord, all turbulent desire, die where that pure radiance falls, as sunlight quenches firelight. There the Spirit of light and holiness completes the "baptism of fire" which was here begun. With seven-fold illumination and inspiring energy, he will fill the spirits of the just to the measure

of their powers. The golden vessels of the sanctuary will by him be filled with the wine of life.

He will be there replenishing all minds with light, all hearts with love; touching all lips with altar-fire, and breathing fervor and inspiration into the devotion of Eternity. Here it is from grace to grace; there from glory to glory.

It is thine, O Blessed Spirit! to lead us these first steps in the way of life. Hold up our goings through this evil world. Keep our feet from falling. Where thou art, there is liberty and pleasantness and safe guidance. Lead us on, thou steadfast Light, from stage to stage of life's journey, till we stand before God in the light everlasting.

"Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." — Psalm cxliii. 10.





The Tabernacle over them.

“He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them,”
(lit. “make a tabernacle over them.”)—Rev. vii. 15.

THE image is drawn from the peculiar favor enjoyed by the chosen people in their wanderings, from the visible protection of the Most High. He had made himself an habitation with men, showed his glory in the mystic fire, and spoken his oracles from “the cloudy pillar.” The shadow of his presence lay upon the thousand tents of Jacob.

In a far higher sense, in the state of the glorified, “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,” and they in him. The holy Jerusalem is the royal pavilion of his majesty. Into it he has gathered all the riches and honor of his kingdom. In it he manifests his glory by

immediate revelation, and gladdens with ever-shining favor the hearts of the redeemed. There, all their wants are supplied from his infinite resources,—the “riches of his glory.” “They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more.” They will feel no craving passion, no unsatisfied desire, but be ever drawing from the deep well-spring of life and blessedness.

And his overshadowing presence will defend them from all evil and hurt and malignant influences. “The sun shall not light on them, nor any heat.” The covering of his tent screens the traveler from the fervor and sultriness and blinding glare of an eastern noon. It shields him from the heavy and chilling dews of night. From all the evils of this desert life, God is to his people here a refuge and safeguard; and hereafter he will hide them “secretly in his pavilion,” where no evil can come near them. Upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion “the glory shall be a defense. And there shall

be a tabernacle in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.” The tent of the desert must soon be struck and folded, and the wayfarer again exposed to heats and dews; but the tabernacle which God has pitched will not be taken down. He has been the dwelling-place of the faithful in all generations. He will be their everlasting home.

Here, O pilgrim of eternity! thou farest through barren wastes; but thou art going home. Thou dwellest in a tent which must soon shrivel up and loosen into dust; but this should only endear the thought of thy quiet and secure dwelling-place in heaven. In this “weary land” your heart sometimes fails, and you cast yourself down in a dark and troubled mood under Elijah’s juniper, instead of sitting in the “shadow of the great Rock.” But there thy dwelling will be eternal, “the Rock of ages,” and thou shalt drink of the living water that gushes

from its clefts. Therefore now “abide in him.” “Watch daily at his gates, wait at the posts of his doors.” Pray that you may “dwell,” by the grace of a daily communion, “in the secret place of the Most High.” Resort thither, by Christ, “the Way,” the living Way, by which mortal weakness joins itself to everlasting strength. Dream not, as others, of making God a refuge merely in times of sorrow,—a porch by the way-side in which you may take shelter from a passing storm. One thing desire of the Lord ; and let that one thing concentrate and bind up the multitude of thoughts within thee, into a vehement longing and necessity of the soul.

“That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days
of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.”

Psalm xxvii. 4.





The Royal Banquet.

"The marriage-supper of the Lamb." — Rev. xix. 9.

WHEN we shrink from bearing the reproach of Christ, let us remember what he is now doing for us in heaven. There he stands, the loving Intercessor, praying that our faith fail not. There he prepares a place for us, and looks forward to the time when all his saints will be prepared to meet him, and he will present them unto the Father "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." His joy, his honor, his glory, will not be complete till the great gathering of the saints, when all things are ready, and he and those for whom he died will be "one, as he and the Father are one." "One," in a visible covenant, and union of everlasting love.

The closest and holiest relationship of

earth is chosen as its symbol. His by solemn betrothal now, they will be his by manifest choice and recognition then,—a high solemnity, a festival of gladness,—of which all shows of earthly joy, however deep and pure, are but the faintest images. Then will he come forth in “glorious apparel,” and all who, though they saw him not, yet loved him, will stand arrayed in his own unsullied righteousness, “as in fine linen, clean and white.” And between them will pass the tender greeting, “My beloved is mine, and I am his!” and the great rejoicing of eternity will begin. None may enter the palace gate of heaven “clothed with sackcloth.” All have on the wedding garment, for “in his presence is fullness of joy.”

If that presence on earth blessed the marriage feast of Cana, how “blessed” will those be who are “called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The highest joy the heart has known on earth is but the shadow of the common joy of heaven, as earth’s

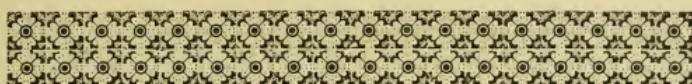
clearest light is but the shadow of heaven's glory. All the water there is turned into wine, and the vessels are filled to the brim. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is there, rejoicing in God, her Saviour; and all the disciples are there, saying, "Thou hast kept the best wine until now." And the servants there are shining angels, gladly "ministering unto the heirs of salvation."

There abides pleasure without alloy, and enjoyment without end. The King has brought his guests into the banqueting house, and "his banner over them is love," to be furled never more. In the sure possession of that love which was "stronger than death," in the serene consciousness of God's favor, they have endless resources of blessedness suited to the wants of an endless being. "Blessed are they that" on earth "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Dost thou mourn that thy desires for holiness and heaven, and the vision of the Saviour and the fruition of God, are so feeble? The

faintest longing shows that immortal life stirs within thee, and that spark will not be quenched. Or, dost thou lament that as yet thou hast no quiet and abiding sense of satisfaction for thy spiritual wants? Pray and wait, for the promise is, "There is no want to them that fear him." "Bread shall be given thee; thy water shall be sure." Here, at times, some little joy enters into thy heart, as if it trickled, drop by drop. There thou shalt "enter into joy" as the wide and bottomless element of thy being. And it will be as lasting as it is pure. The joy of the redeemed flows from God as its fountain, and after all its windings, returns into God as its ocean.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." —
Nehemiah viii. 10.





The River of Life.

"And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." — Rev. xxii. 1.

AS thou goest on thy way, look not back to a paradise that is lost. Look forward, and long for a better paradise that is promised. "The second Adam, the Lord from heaven," is the keeper of the garden, and, to cheer thy fainting spirit, gives thee glimpses of the beauty and pleasantness within. A river went out of the region of Eden, to water the garden which was man's first heritage. But that garden is withered, and its river is dry. Man is an outcast and wanderer, and every well he digs in the wilderness is bitter as Marah to his lips.

But what our sin has forfeited, God's mercy has given back, and it will be lost no more. "There is a river, the streams

whereof make glad the city of our God." Even here, in this desert land, hast thou not drunk of its refreshing streams? Passing through this "valley of Baca," hast thou not come to springs fed by dews of heaven, and drawn water with joy out of wells of "salvation?" Yet how often hast thou journeyed many days as "in a dry and parched land where no water is?" Or, sitting by the well, hast felt thy heart so cold, thy faith so feeble, that, as if thou hadst nothing to draw with, thou hast gone thy way athirst and unrefreshed?

But in the better country, the river of life flows on in a deep, full, and brimming tide. Through the midst of the new Jerusalem it runs, and nothing can hinder the happy citizens from coming to its banks, and drawing at will from its reviving waters.

It is "water of life," communicating ever-fresh supplies of life and vigor and gladness to those who drink of it. It is "a river of water of life," gliding onward in a calm,

stately, and unhindered current. It is "pure," and "clear as crystal," holding nothing in solution that can sully or ruffle its transparent purity,—ever keeping in its glassy deeps the images of all that is beautiful and serene and holy. And, unlike the river of the former paradise, which flowed from earthly springs, it "proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Till that throne shakes, its springs will never cease to flow. It has its sources in the innermost depth of heaven,—in the secret heart of God,—and thus it ever replenishes itself from fountains that are inexhaustible. Blessed emblem of all that can refresh and satisfy the longings of the immortal mind,—limitless supplies of spiritual life and joy,—of "peace which passeth understanding," flowing from the mystery of a "love which passeth knowledge!" The Father showing forth his glory,—the Son opening his heart of love,—the Spirit filling the mind with light and blessedness!

How narrow and limited are our capacities here; how seldom, if ever, are they satisfied as they might be! But there they are ever widening and enlarging; and as they expand, life and gladness are ever flowing in and keeping them at the full. By the wells of the wilderness, think, O Christian! of the well of Bethlehem. Thirst for the water which Jesus gives, and which “springs up into everlasting life.” Let this be thy daily prayer: “Make me to drink of the river of thy pleasures,” that well of love which gushes from thy heart,—pure, deep, abounding, and perpetual! And after being led by his Spirit to the “nether springs” of grace, the Lamb shall lead thee to the “upper springs,”—the “living fountains of waters” which flow in the “goodly heritage” above:

“All my springs are in thee.”—Psalm lxxxvii. 7.





The Tree of Life.

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life." — Rev. xxii. 2.

IN the earthly paradise there was a "tree of life"—but only one—"in the midst of the garden." When man fell, the eating of it would have entailed on him an immortality of woe. But thine is an inheritance, O pilgrim to Zion! where life is not only given back to thee, but "given more abundantly." There, this tree of sovereign virtue grows in its native soil. Every-where it blooms, the emblem of happiness that will never end. All along the banks of the river, its branches overhang the peaceful current, and the screening foliage casts a cool and delicious freshness over the streets where the holy citizens walk in white.

Here, now and then, at seasons and in

scenes dear to thy memory, thou hast sat under the shadow of thy Lord “with great delight,” and found his “fruit sweet to the taste.” But how few and how transient have been those seasons of hallowed enjoyment! Their very rareness marks them out as green spots in the waste. They are places like those where the patriarchs planted groves and reared altars, because God had there met with them, but divided from each other by long and sultry marches.

But in the Paradise above, that shadow neither moves nor turns. Thy Lord departs not from thee, nor thou from him. This “great delight” is the law and element of thy being. But there will be more than gladness. There will be nurture suited to the needs and longings of a purified spirit. All that can satisfy the desires and capacities of a sinless nature will be supplied in abundance and variety. To this tree every month brings the ripeness and mellowness of summer, and its boughs are laden with twelve

kinds of clustering fruits. Its very leaves have a sweet balsamic virtue. They are not to be trodden under foot, but are “for the healing of the nations.”

With these leaves the Saviour bound up and healed thy wounds, and thou hast learned to value them;—to prize the simplest words of Christ, because they have life in them,—the commonest mercies of God, because they have love in them. If the leaf of heaven have health in it, what fragrance will be in its flowers, what sweetness in its fruits?

How vivid a type of the fresh and ever-varied delights reserved for those to whom the Saviour’s death has opened the heavenly Paradise! What “fullness of joy” is in the Father’s presence,—what richness of provision in his house! There are “many mansions” there. There is “bread enough and to spare.” Its wine-vessels are filled to the brim. Its fruits never cloy. Its pleasures never fade. There is no sameness, no

satiety, no weariness, in the exquisite enjoyments which fill up the bright and spacious round of an immortal being. “Not as the world giveth” does Christ give.

The life of heaven may appear dull and blank and monotonous to the world; but not to thee, O Christian! Thou hast the key to it in the love of Christ. Were it not eternity, it would be too short to give to him all thou hast to give of thy love, and to receive from him all thou hast to receive of the “joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.” The tokens and pledges of that love,—thy sweet experiences of heaven,—will be ever new. There are the pleasant fruits which thou shalt gather. For Time’s “winter is past, the rain is over and gone;” and the happy soul is “summering high in bliss upon the hills of God.”

“Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.”—Psalm lxiii. 3.



The Crown of Life.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." — Rev. ii. 10.

CHRIST warns his faithful saints at Smyrna, tried sore already, to prepare for a fierce storm of tribulation gathering in the distance. Still he says to them, "Fear not!" A little while and it will burst upon you, and again a little while, and it will pass away, and you will be with your Lord! There is a "needs be" that you should be tried even unto death; but be ye "faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." It is long since the aged Polycarp, and many of these saints at Smyrna, walked through the heated furnace to their crown. But the words that spoke fervor and courage and endurance to them speak to us.

In the warfare we wage, if we have taken

up the cross, what hope could we have if we did not hear his voice in the thickest of the fight,—if we did not see him wave the banner and point to the prize? It is only in him, as “a very present help,” that we can overcome. And when all his saints are at his feet, each wearing this bright diadem on his forehead, how deep will be the Saviour’s joy. For every crown he sees, a drop of his blood was given; and for every ransomed spirit that wears one, a jewel sparkles in his own.

It is a “crown of life,”—the reward of faithfulness unto death, and victory in death,—the seal and emblem of life immortal. It is a “crown of righteousness,— the reward laid up for those who have walked with the Lord their Righteousness in peace and equity, and kept their steadfastness in an evil time,— the memorial of their complete and unsullied purity. It is a “crown of glory,”—symbol of favor and honor and blessedness to be enjoyed in the presence of

God,—a crown like that which Christ wears.
All heaven lies within that golden circlet.

It is an “incorruptible crown,”—a crown of amaranth, ever fresh and green and unfading. No rust or dimness will gather on that virgin gold. No sereness or blight will stain the leaves of that unwithering wreath. For the blessedness of which it is the emblem knows no change nor decay. He who is over the house of God dispenses its honors with a full hand and a willing heart. There are no alternations, no vicissitudes, in that “fullness of joy.” No planet waxes and wanes in the sky of heaven,—no tide ebbs and flows in that crystalline sea; but all is ever at the full.

For such a “recompense of reward,” who would not be faithful to his Master’s service? Who that knows the love of Christ but would serve him unto death, were there no white robe, no golden crown! But he sends us not “a warfare at our own charge,” nor does he leave us without hope of reward.

Let us bear the cross as far as our Master bore it, and then lay it down. It may press heavily on us, at times, and we may not be able to look up; but when it presses most heavily, he will stand by us and help us to bear it. He will divide the load, or double the strength. In looking unto him we shall be lightened. In waiting on him our strength will be renewed. And through that very weight and pressure, borne with a meek and chastened and trustful spirit, things invisible will grow clearer by degrees. It is the deepening twilight of earth which shows the stars of heaven. And in the shadows of the cross we begin to see the brightness of the crown of life.

"Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done
the will of God, ye might receive the
promise." —Heb. x. 36.





The Hidden Manna.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."—Rev. ii. 17.

THEIR daily bread was given to Israel in the wilderness by the immediate hand of God. Every dawn, through all these years of wandering, the silent miracle came like the sunlight, and the sweet provision was sprinkled round the tents in the early dew. And, as a lasting memorial, this manna, gathered into a golden urn, was preserved in the sanctuary ages after the curtains of the desert tabernacle had given place to the cedar house of Solomon. This vessel of manna, placed in the ark, stood in the holiest of all, within the vail. It was hidden from the eyes of man. The cherubim of glory overshadowed it. The mystic Shekinah gleamed above it.

These things were for an allegory. In the manna which he gathered from the ground, the godly Israelite saw an emblem of Him who said, in after time, “I am the bread of life.” Every dewdrop, in which a seed of that heaven-sown provision lay, held its image of the Saviour. He is the “true bread,” “the living bread which came down from heaven, whereof if a man eat, he shall live for ever.”

Wherever the faintest pulses of spiritual life are beating, that life has been implanted by him, and by him it will be nourished and maintained. He now, within the vail, ministers by his Spirit all needful supplies of grace to his people. For the hidden life, he provides “hidden manna.” He gives “meat to eat which the world knoweth not of.” Nor, though “hidden,” is it the less abundant, though unbelief often checks the free supply. The hand may be secret, but the gift is generous and godlike. The manna laid up in heaven’s golden urn is inexhaust-

ible as his love. It is not “shew-bread,” hallowed and forbidden to common use,—but “daily bread,” dispensed with divine profusion, and without which our souls must starve and pine. We can not measure our necessities. Let us not limit our demands. Let us ask much, that we may receive much.

And this is “meat which endureth to everlasting life.” It is to “him that overcometh” it will be given. It is himself that Christ will give in all his fullness of grace and affluence of glory, for the endless fruition of the redeemed. Every high and pure desire will possess itself in him. In him they will find an infinite resource for an infinite affection.

The manna, laid up in the golden vessel, underwent no change. Nor will the “bread of heaven” ever lose its sweetness to the spiritual taste; but Christ will be the only-desired and all-sufficing portion of the saints. If, in the days of his flesh, he spake of his greatest miracles as “crumbs” from his

table (as if they had dropped carelessly from his hand), what will be the “children’s bread”? If from the five loaves of the fisher lad of Tiberias he fed the multitude in the desert, what will it be, when he gathers his saints in ranks around him to satisfy the mighty longing of eternity?

Here on earth let us seek to be brought, at every point of our weakness and want, into contact with that grace which is boundless and all-available. And hereafter, through every affection and energy of a purified nature, we shall be drawn to the communion of his love, and be “filled with all the fullness of God.”

“I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.”
Psalm xvii. 15.





The White Stone and the New Name.

“And I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.” — Rev. ii. 17.

THE world in its wrath and pride had risen up against the bearers of the cross. It was not worthy of them, but it treated them as if they were not worthy of it. The holiest was the most shining mark for the arraignment of slander. The weakest was not too low to be crushed by its iron heel of power. The world’s law had no even scales and bandaged eyes before the cross. And when one, “not ashamed” of that cross, was dragged before its tribunals, each judge dropped the black stone into the urn. Each would have written on that stone a name of bitter hatred and falsehood and scorn, had he spoken out what he believed a Christian

man to be. Christ was scourged and crucified,—Barabbas went free.

“The offense of the cross is not ceased.” There is open condemnation for the Christian here; but there is open absolution there. The Master saith to every tried and faithful servant, “I will give thee a white stone, and in the stone a new name written,—my own name!” Antipas had been condemned to die for Christ in the court of Pergamos; but the lictor’s stroke releases him from the world’s wrong and pain, and he goes to receive the “white stone” from the hand of his Lord.

Even on earth, the white stone with the new name is given. Have we chosen Christ as our Master? Have we received him as “the Lord our Righteousness”? Have we “peace with God through the blood of his cross”? Does his Spirit dwell in us? That “white stone,” token of forgiveness, emblem of innocence and favor, is ours; and though worlds were in the one scale, this little sym-

bol would outweigh them, if cast into the other. When justified, we receive it, and the “new name” which is in it the Spirit writes upon our hearts. He erases the name “child of wrath,” and writes Christ’s own name, “Son of God.” And when his clear and holy light shines on the letters of that name, and it brightens in the heart, like the jeweled stones of the Urim and Thummim in the darkened sanctuary, the soul cries, “Abba, Father! I, an heir of condemnation, am become heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ.”

This is the seal of the Spirit, “which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.” “The world seeth him not, neither knoweth him,” but “we know him, for he dwelleth with us, and is in us.” The world can not know the inward evidence; be it ours to show it the outward sign. That new name, written in the fair letters of a saintly life, a crucified spirit, a heavenly mind, should be “known and read of all men.” As we go

on our way, let us silently preach Christ to others. Let our life be a sweet attraction,—our look a tender invitation. And some who would not read a written epistle may be constrained to read the luminous words of a living one.

In the new Jerusalem, the “new name” is bright on every brow. Yet the old name of earth will not be forgotten there. For though resting with his Lord, Christ’s servant, slaughtered at Pergamos, is still “Antipas, my faithful martyr.” For him Glory had no laurel, History no niche, Poetry no song, and his ashes were scattered on the winds, or gathered into a nameless urn. But his name was spoken out of heaven by the lips of Christ.

“I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.”
Isaiah xliii. 1.





The Morning-Star.

“I will give him the morning-star.” — Rev. ii. 28.

IT is a desperate warfare which the soldier of Christ wages with his invisible foes. It often seems to last through long hours of darkness. His only resource is to look up and pray for light. Through the weary watches, he cries, “Oh that the day would break, and the shadows flee away!” And gleams of light fall through the clouds, and he sees that there is One who fights for him, — One who has fought and overcome, and whose presence is the pledge of victory. As Luther sings in the battle-song of the Reformation : —

“No strength of ours checks Satan’s pride;
To tempt it is perdition:
But the right Man fights on our side;
From God is his commission.

Ask ye, who is the same?
Christ Jesus is his name,—
The Lord of heaven's host;
No other Lord we boast,
And he the day must carry.”

To him that fights the good fight of faith, the heavenly Captain says, “ I will give thee the morning-star ! ” As if that fair, white orb, whose dewdrop of light trembles on the front of dawn, is to sparkle on the victor’s brow. The “ spiritual body ” may be crowned with some such glorious symbol in heaven. Some bright device of immortality may distinguish apostle or martyr among the sons of God, so that around the Sun of Righteousness the saints, shining like morning-stars, may move in glorious rings,— each to each signaling his name, through the boundless deeps of eternity.

But Christ consecrates the symbol by making it a type of himself: “ I am the bright and Morning-Star.” In giving such a token of favor, he gives himself to his redeemed, in a fullness of joy and light and

glory of which they can not conceive in this twilight-time of earth. He will appear to them as the sign of hope and gladness,—the Star of the Resurrection Morn; and that sweet light will prelude the long, unsetting watches of the eternal day.

And in that light shall they be changed. This “corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality,” and the “body of our vileness be made like to the body of his glory,”—shining like the light, filled with holy gladness and divine illumination. Yet a few days of warfare and weariness, and this glory shall be revealed in us. “Christ our Life shall appear,” and “we shall be like him.”

Are we girding on our armor, like good soldiers, and standing on our watch? Are we binding on our sandals and trimming our lamps, like servants who would be found faithful? The long night will wear to an end; the hard struggle will end in victory. And then will come the cloudless day and

the spotless robe and sinless peace and endless rest.

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Here it lies in the furrows, under the mold, in a rude and ungenial clime. There it shall have blossomed and ripened with hundred-fold increase, and the rich fruitage will wave thick and golden through the long summer-time of eternity. One ray of heaven's sunshine will be brighter than firmaments of earthly suns and stars. The gleaning of the grapes of that celestial growth will be better than the richest vintages of earth. Our life-gathered wisdom is but the alphabet of heaven's full-toned speech; our highest discoveries, the crude rudiments of its learning. The Ark of Eternity floats on waters that drown the loftiest Ararats of Time.

"He will beautify the meek with salvation."

Psalm cxlix. 4.



The Pillar in the Temple.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.” — Rev. iii. 12.

THE foundations of a spiritual temple are already laid in the world. Out of the loud tumult and false appearances of Time, God’s great work calmly unfolds itself, and rises “without sound of axe or hammer.” Stone by stone, and course by course, it will be built up and compacted, till “the head stone is brought forth with shoutings.”

Here, in the temple of the visible church, those “who seem to be pillars” are often shaken and removed; and our hearts tremble, and faith droops, as if God’s cause would fall with them. But no earthly hand supports that cause,—no more than the granite battlements of a mountain-chain prop up the crystal vault which in the distance seems to rest upon them

The heavenly Master calls his servants to himself when their earthly work is done, and gives them the place prepared for them in the “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Blessed labor,—holy warfare,—to be assured of such a recompense. To the weakest faith, to the faintest heart, in which a spark of spiritual life glows and trembles Godwards, it will be given in the strength of Christ to overcome. And for victory so gained, there is this exceeding great reward. He shall have an abiding-place and name in heaven,—be made “a pillar in the temple,”—that which is essential to its beauty and completeness. As a pillar, to stand there for ever in the presence of his Saviour,—to go no more out,—to feel that no violence can assail him, no trouble reach him, no evil breathe upon him any more. There is nothing deep enough in all God’s universe to loosen the foundations of his trust,—nothing strong enough to come in and separate between him and the almighty

love in which he stands. His “life is hid with Christ in God,” and the hand that would threaten this life must strike through Christ’s love and God’s omnipotence before it reach it.

Till all his saints are set in everlasting station there, Christ waits as for the outshining of his glory and fulfilling of his joy. Till the Father’s house is filled with all its guests, the heavenly temple is not graced with all its pillars, nor garnished with all its sacred ornaments. But it will be filled at last. Not one pillar will be wanting,—not one of his redeemed left behind,—not one jewel of eternity left forgotten in the dust of earth. Every mansion will have its bright inhabitant, and every golden harp its selected minstrel.

And for this “time of restitution” he waits, while here we serve him with cold hearts and languid endeavors. How do our hands hang down, and our feet falter in the way! How do we sit desponding in the

dust, or stand idle in the market-place, or slumber on the watch with dying lamps in our hand, when we should be “looking for and hasting unto” him, serving him with a fervent spirit, suffering for him with a patient and joyful mind!

We are here as “reeds shaken with the wind” and bruised by storms; but “the bruised reed he will not break;” and, through his all-sufficient grace, it will grow up into the strength and steadfastness of a “cedar in Lebanon.” The progress of the divine life within us may be slow, but “he will bring forth judgment unto victory.” Let us abide in him who is “the Author and Finisher of our faith.” He will not “forsake the work of his own hands.”

“Thy gentleness hath made me great.”
Psalm xviii. 35.





The Inscriptions on the Pillar.

"I will write upon him the name of my God."

Rev. iii. 12.

HERE and there, in the desolate plains and valleys of the Lesser Asia, some moldering columns, amidst heaps of ruin, or lettered marbles, shattered and defaced, point out where a city has perished. These were pillars of stately temples reared to the gods of Olympus,—memorial tablets which Ephesus, or Sardis, or Philadelphia, had dedicated to some prince or citizen.

The Christian men, to whom the apostle wrote, passed these temples daily, where the white marble dazzled in the sunshine, and the golden letters of these inscriptions flashed in the light. They had read the name of the god or hero to whom each was consecrated, the name of the city in which

it was reared, and the name of its founder. These were the men, “in jeopardy every hour,” whom Christ encouraged to “fight the good fight,” by the promise that they should be “pillars” in the heavenly temple. His own hand was to place them there, and to grave on them the words of solemn consecration.

“I will write upon him the name of my God!” For it is by his grace they were “called and chosen” and kept “faithful,” and to his glory are they standing there for ever. “The name of the city of my God which is new Jerusalem,” — for this is the place of their spiritual birth and citizenship, — the blessed community into which they are gathered, — the mother-city, and abiding habitation of their souls. They are in it and of it; and “the city which hath foundations” would not be complete and faultlessly beautiful in the eyes of its builder, if one of them were not there.

And lastly,—the name of Him who founds

and dedicates the sacred columns,—“ I will write upon him my new name.” His name was glorious as the everlasting Son of the Father; but when he stooped from his throne, and wore our flesh, and suffered, and died, the Father “ highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name.”

This blessed name, which here they bear and love, will be written visibly hereafter on each of the redeemed. Thus he will claim in them a perpetual possession, and give them assurance of his everlasting love. “ I have graven thee on the palms of my hands,” he said, in suffering for them; and now, when they reign with him, it is his own name which he engraves. The name of Jesus is cut deep in each of these living pillars, as in eternal adamant. “ God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Christ “is not ashamed to call them brethren.” The “new Jerusalem” rejoices to be the mother of them all.

Shall we shrink from confessing that name,

which is to be the endlessly-repeated sign and cipher of heaven? Shall we be “ashamed” of his cross? Here that name should be written on the front of our profession,—a golden title, running along every page of life. Oh that it were not so often hidden beneath the gathering dust and mold of the world,—that its luster did not wax dim and fade in this false and bewildering glare! That we could ever bear it in the strength of quietness and confidence and deep untroubled joy,—that our hearts could be, like the Grecian mountain, so calm and windless that the letters, traced by the priest in the ashes of the yearly sacrifice, remained un-effaced upon the altar.

“What manner of persons ought we to be,” when we think of the rock whence we were hewn, and of the temple wherein we hope to stand?

“They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.”

Malachi iii. 17.



The Seat on the Throne

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." — Rev. iii. 21.

HERE that glory culminates, which is reserved for those who have followed Christ in this temptation. This is the highest reach,—the fullest growth and flower of their blessedness. Step by step, he has cheered them on with sweet words of promise; and now he leads them to his throne, and bids them mount its shining stairs, and sit thereon in rest and glory everlasting. A sudden transition of thought from the attitude of standing and knocking at the closed door of the heart (v. 20). There the promise is, that, when we "open the door," he will "come in" with the blessings of salvation. Here it is that we, having thus received him, and been "accepted in the Be-

loved," will be led by him through the open door of the Father's house, and presented "faultless" before him, and seated with our Lord upon his throne. What appeal could be made to the believing heart so strong and tender as this, in which the Saviour stands before us, One with his suffering, One with his glorified people? What can nerve us to the holy obedience and strenuous warfare of the Christian life, if not the thought of that union whose living links Christ's own hand clasps and rivets? What, if not the assurance of that intense sympathy and spiritual communion, which, from the moment it begins on earth, will not cease till it is perfected in heaven? In this holy ground, the Saviour has opened the deepest and fullest springs of comfort to his people in this waiting-time. We can trace in his last earthly words the recurrence and expansion of this thought, like the coming and going of a sweeter understrain in a grand and solemn melody.

It is, first, a promise of peace,—his own peace. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” Then it is a promise of joy,—his own joy. “That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” Then, in his dying prayer, his love rises to its spring-tide, and it is a promise of glory,—his own glory. “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

From the throne on which he sits, Lord of Glory and King of Saints, his eye commands the checkered track of each, as it winds through the wilderness, and goes down into the shadow of the valley, and issues bright and straight from death to the gate of heaven, and thence to the throne. He sees each, in his turn, overcoming through grace which he supplies,—each emerging victorious to receive the recompense which his grace hath promised. For on that throne he alone sits by right, they by favor. He sits thereon, Head of the

spiritual body which is exalted in him,—“first-born among many brethren,”—whom he uplifts to his own honor and blessedness. And angels, those elder brethren of creation, who never left the Father’s house, see this exaltation of the younger, who had fallen, without a murmur. They will rejoice in our joy; and with us, though not like us, adore that love which has closed up all its mysterious passages in this grand result.

How far off do we stand from the brightness of such hopes! How do the shadows and powers of this evil world darken our spirit and chill our praises! How do we “see him as not now, and behold him as not nigh!” What a faint response do we send up to that wondrous prayer that rises within the vail! There “he abideth faithful,” and prays that our faith fail not!

“It is a faithful saying: If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—

2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.



Riches of Glory.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

THINGS which God hath prepared for them that love him"—how vainly do our minds strive to grasp them, and grope, dazzled, through a mist of glory! What must be the delights and enjoyments, which, slowly as it were, he has gathered into the chambers of his house,—the heaped-up "riches of his glory,"—the unwasting resources of eternity! It is "an inheritance reserved in heaven," an expression which implies surpassing splendor and profound concealment. How can we conceive of blessedness so pure and ethereal as that which God "hides in the secret of his presence"? Our thoughts stumble and falter among the elemental truths which form the

lowest step of his throne,—and how can they climb up to its radiant summits?

Therefore the hints and foreshadowings given in the holy Word of the great happiness of heaven, are so often conveyed in negative form. “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.” “There shall be no more curse.” “There shall be no night there.” “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” “The former things are passed away.” We can not reach the positive reality of an infinite joy. Our conceptions are cast into the mold of things around us. We strive, how vainly, to shape the perishing and evanescent forms of Sense into types and similitudes of eternal Truth. But far beyond the range of thought,—the sphere of pure imagination,—those things are withdrawn into a region and element of their own, when it is said, “they have not entered into the heart of man.”

“Yet God hath revealed them to us by

his Spirit." He has even on earth endued the regenerate nature with some power to discern the character of that glory, which, as of spiritual essence, must remain for ever a mystery to the natural mind. And he has inspired it with holy affections to love and long for the enjoyment of that which it dimly sees, with a passionate desire. Only heaven's glory can satisfy these fervent longings through which the heart throbs as if it would break in the utterance:—"As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God,"— "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee?" It is only the spiritual mind that can thus "see the kingdom of God," and be satisfied to build up from such materials the fabric of its eternal hopes.

Wonderful grace, that mortal eye should ever have seen the faintest vision of this glory afar off,—as the beloved disciple, when the bright foundations and crystal

battlements and golden streets of the heavenly city shut out the brown sea-beaten rocks of Patmos from his view. But grace more wonderful, that hope should ever have come to one who has felt the weight and bitterness of sin, that he should go up into it as the city of his habitation, and walk amongst its happy citizens, and go out no more !

That "Lord's-day" in Patmos was much to be remembered. The Apocalypse is the record of its holy hours. But how much more glorious the open vision of that never-ending Sabbath which "remaineth for the people of God." What an Apocalypse will that be, in which the glorified spirit records its experiences of eternity !

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Rev. xxii. 14.



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